

may have voted against the ruling popular party in the belief that its support for the Iraq war was responsible for Spain being targeted by al Qaeda.

If, indeed, as this Member believes, al Qaeda carried out these terrorist attacks just 3 days before a national election in order to affect the results of the election, it would be an extremely troubling development. We already know that al Qaeda aims to kill our people and cripple our economies. It is, furthermore, extraordinarily disturbing that this group seems to be targeting governments friendly to the United States in order to bring them down.

An editorial in the Omaha World-Herald yesterday declared that, "The Spanish voters, in their sorrow and anger, have broadcast exactly the wrong signal: terrorism works."

Mr. Speaker, if anyone in Europe believes that standing on the sidelines will somehow protect them from al Qaeda, they are wrong. Europe was a target of al Qaeda even before 9/11 and the Iraq war, and it remains a target of al Qaeda. The response to terrorism cannot be a quest for neutrality. It cannot be the pursuit of a nonaggression pact or a *modus vivendi* with al Qaeda. This is not possible.

The only response can be a reaffirmation of a commitment to strenuously work together within Europe and within the Atlantic Alliance to root out the terrorists in our midst and to destroy their ability to operate throughout the world.

Fortunately, we see indications from our European allies that this will be their response. Already officials in European countries and in the European Union are stepping up their efforts to improve cooperation against terrorist groups and strengthen legislation against terrorism.

However, that inclination, apparently, is not shared by Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, which is the executive bureaucracy of the EU. On Monday, Mr. Prodi said, "It is clear that using force is not the answer to resolving the conflict with terrorists."

This outrageous, wrong-headed comment is the worst thing an EU official could have said in response to the terrorist attacks in Spain.

Instead of vowing to redouble efforts to defeat al Qaeda in the mountains of Afghanistan, the head of the European Commission advocates appeasement and surrender to those who orchestrated the massacre of innocents in Madrid.

If the terrorists were encouraged by their apparent success at influencing the Spanish elections, they must be ecstatic that high-ranking officials like Mr. Prodi want to pursue a separate, dishonorable accommodation with terrorists.

In an article in yesterday's Washington Post, Robert Kagan offered a withering critique of Mr. Prodi's comments.

Mr. Kagan wrote, "Al Qaeda seeks to divide Europe and the United States not just in Iraq, but in the overall struggle. It seeks to convince

Europeans that not only the use of force in Iraq was mistaken, but that the use of force against terrorism in general is mistaken and futile—just as Prodi is arguing. Are Europeans prepared to grant all of al Qaeda's conditions in exchange for a promise of security? Thoughts of Munich and 1938 come to mind."

And Mr. Kagan recognizes that the policy of weakness advocated by Mr. Prodi will only encourage the terrorists. "Responsible heads in Europe must understand that anything that smacks of retreat in the aftermath of this latest attack could raise the likelihood of further attacks," Mr. Kagan wrote.

Surprisingly, a more realistic European assessment of the motivations and goals of these terrorists came from the French newspaper *Le Monde*.

Never known for sharing a worldview with the Bush Administration, *Le Monde* on Monday noted that these terrorists "attack democratic societies because of what they are: open, flexible, respectful of the rule of law," and for them "the only measure of success is killing as many people as possible."

Mr. Speaker, America must stand by our Spanish allies and all of our European allies in this struggle against terrorism. We extend our sympathy to the families of those killed in the Madrid bombings, to those injured, and to the Spanish people. And we reaffirm our commitment to work together to defeat the perpetrators of this terrible crime.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I will insert into the RECORD the Omaha World-Herald article.

[From the Omaha World-Herald, Mar. 16, 2004]

WRONG SIGNAL

Spain's change of leadership can be viewed as saying that terrorism works.

The surprise is not that Spain's prime minister-elect figures on pulling his nation's troops out of Iraq. He had made that pledge during the campaign. The surprise is that he was elected.

Spaniards have a long history of bravery verging on stubbornness. So it is unsettling to see them give at least a surface appearance of knuckling under to terrorism. Prior to last week's death-dealing bombings aboard Spanish trains, national polls had strongly suggested that Mariano Rajoy, candidate of the incumbent Popular Party, would be elected prime minister.

Then evidence increasingly pointed to the likelihood that Islamic fundamentalists—quite possible al-Qaida—were responsible for the bombings. After that, enough popular votes shifted to swing the Socialist Party into the parliamentary majority. That will make José Rodríguez Zapatero prime minister.

In campaigning, Zapatero vowed to make fighting terror his "most immediate priority." He has a strange way of showing it. The signal being sent here, intentionally or not, is that radicals can gain advantage by murdering hundreds of innocent people.

There may be some wiggle room in all this. What Zapatero has specifically said is that he will pull out his nation's troops on June 30 unless, by then, the United Nations has taken charge in Iraq. That brings to the forefront what is meant by "take charge."

The occupying forces intend to hand political control of Iraq to an interim government on July 1, and there is ample evidence that the United Nations will embrace that change. Moreover, substantial U.N. involvement in peacekeeping would be widely welcomed. But expecting the international body

to actually run the show is unrealistic. It isn't staffed to handle the task.

Spain's withdrawal from Iraq would be symbolic, in that its troops number less than 1 percent of international forces there. But in such matters, symbolism is important. It's true that about 90 percent of Spaniards opposed their nation's involvement in Iraq. But that opposition appears to have taken on added weight after the bombs went off.

The world weeps with Spain, which suffered a terrible blow. But the Spanish voters, in their sorrow and anger, have broadcast exactly the wrong signal: Terrorism works. It's enough to make you wonder what nation might be next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MOORE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. CHOCOLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to offer an update from the Washington Waste Watch. Every year the Federal Government wastes billions of dollars as a result of overpayments of government credit cards, abuse of the Federal entitlement programs, and the mismanagement of the Federal bureaucracy. The waste exists in every program in every agency, in every Department of the Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, let me share a few examples with you. Accounting errors prevented the Department of Agriculture from being able to account for \$5 billion of its receipts and expenditures. The Department had no way of knowing where the money came from and where it had gone.

The Department of Defense spent \$41 million to develop a system to track its ammunition, but 8 years later no system had been created or was close to completion.

Individuals defaulting on their student loans cost the Department of Education \$4 billion in 1999 alone. An audit of the Department of Energy discovered that the Department had incorrectly listed \$900 million in assets instead of liabilities and could not account for \$56 million in missing funds.

That is not all, Mr. Speaker. A 2000 audit of the Department of Labor discovered that 35 percent of the recipients of dislocated worker benefits were ineligible for the program.

More than a quarter of the IRS's earned income credit payments were improper. The error rate is consistently between 27 and 32 percent of the total claims. In 1999 alone it cost the American taxpayers \$8.1 billion.

The Veterans Affairs Department continued to pay the daughter of a veteran \$78,000 in benefits after the veteran had died.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are amazing examples. But what I think is even more amazing is that the Democrats want to raise our taxes to pay for more of this.

Mr. Speaker, these are but a few of the examples of the enormous amounts of waste that the Federal Government generates every single year, but these are only the tip of the iceberg when compared to the total amount of waste in Federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, as long as the Democrats continue to define the value of programs by how much we spend rather than how well or how effectively we spend, the taxpayers will continue to suffer.

□ 2045

Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats still want to raise our taxes for more of this.

ASSURING FISCAL HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. CASE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CASE. Mr. Speaker, good evening and aloha.

Tonight, I rise to address again the single most important issue facing our country, now, next year, and well into the next generation, and that is our crushing budget deficit and the fiscal corruption of our Nation's finances; and yes, I do not use that word "corruption" lightly because that is what is happening.

I do so in solidarity with my fellow Blue Dog Members, people of sincerity who I respect and who have stood here for years and decades and argued for fiscal responsibility and with whom I today reintroduced the Assuring Fiscal Honesty and Accountability Act of 2004. That is the subject that I want to address briefly here tonight because I can assure my fellow citizens, beyond any semblance of doubt, that fiscal honesty and accountability have no place at today's seat of power here in Washington.

Perhaps I am overly simplistic, but on any issue I like to ask: First, is there a problem? Second, what exactly is it? Third, what is the solution? Fourth, how do we accomplish it?

The act that we introduced today addresses the fourth question: How do we accomplish it? And it starts with the fourth question because I do not know how anybody can doubt that we have a problem. We know we have one, and we know exactly what it is, the systematic pillaging of our Nation's fiscal and budgetary integrity and resources for short-term political gain. We know the general parameters of the solution, and today we have had a good interchange on that.

We know we have to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse, wherever it is. We know we have to balance revenues and

spending, but the reality is that we have lost our way on just how to get there.

We learned once in the eighties and the nineties that for us to have a realistic discussion and to make realistic decisions on the incredibly tough issues that go with the fiscal discipline territory, whether to raise or lower taxes and on whom, who and what to spend taxpayers hard-earned money on, and who not to spend it on, we had to set the rules of engagement and institute some basic checks and balances on natural political tendencies arising out of our reluctance, our abhorrence, of saying no. These rules were necessary, even though we had already placed limits on the amount of total national debt and required a separate vote to breach that national debt.

Those votes had become, as they are today and as we proved again today in the Committee on the Budget, a superfluous pro forma exercise as we now break through the \$7.5 trillion total debt barrier. These rules had fancy names like discretionary spending caps and pay-go or pay-as-you-go, but they all stood for the same basic concept, a concept we are all familiar with in our personal and business finances: Set the ground rules, the overall boundary of the finances as a responsible, achievable, sustainable level before making individual decisions, and then match those decisions to those rules. The caps were just that, overhaul caps or limits. We could move around under caps, but we could not breach the caps, and pay-go just said if we break the rules in one area, if we exceed in one area, we have to make it up somewhere else, a pay-as-you-go. It all has to balance one way or the other. And these rules worked up until 3 years ago.

We had reversed a fiscal decline and were heading towards surpluses, but then what happened was something inexcusable, and it was on the watch of the current administration because that is when people around here in the majority and downtown decided they did not like those rules, because those rules got in the way of radically reducing revenues, while at the same time busting spending up to record highs. Yes, let us not talk about whose responsibility the spending increases were. The rest is history; record deficits as far as the eye can see, record total debt, material risk to our very fiscal foundations.

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) again said tonight a saying that I am fond of: In order to get out of the hole, you have to stop digging. That is what this bill says: Let us stop digging right now by using techniques that worked in the past and let us start climbing.

One would think the majority and the administration would be falling all over themselves to get out in front on this issue. After all, I hear tell they are the party of fiscal responsibility. What an incredible surprise here in Washington to discover that that is anywhere but the truth.

So, lo and behold, they are not. They do not mind discretionary spending caps, as long as it is only the programs that they do not like. They do not mind putting caps on them. But, by the way, the programs that they want to raise, the programs that are busting our budget, no, we cannot afford discretionary spending caps. They do not mind pay-go, sounds good, as long as it does not apply to those programs, as long as it does not apply to evaluations of revenues and taxes.

Well, any fool can see that when you set the rules, they have to apply to everyone. When you balance a budget, you cannot leave it with so many outs, so many holes, that it is dead on arrival. And that is what the absence of this discretionary spending caps and pay-go rules has done.

So our bill says to everybody, hey, simply, you say you stand for fiscal responsibility, prove it. Set some rules that work and then live with them.

I urge this bill's prompt passage. And to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, who have stood here today talking about fiscal responsibility, I invite their cosponsorship. I think we can form a good team to provide some realistic budget rules.

SALUTING OUR SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago today, one of the world's most brutal dictators still sat on his throne and boasted that he would defy the world with impunity, protected by massive armies, and threatened terror through weapons of mass destruction. We sent brave young men and women into harm's way to contest that point.

Where it is appropriate, we pause today and review the progress we made, not against the monstrosity and Saddam Hussein's regime but the total war on terror. Our troops have registered a string of unbroken victories. They have won every battle and every campaign. They have destroyed the staging areas and the hiding holes of those who attacked this Nation on September 11, 2001, and they have helped to restore the security of their fellow Americans.

They have driven the Taliban from control of Afghanistan and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have destroyed the Iraqi war machine and captured Saddam Hussein and are restoring the government of that country to its people. They have liberated a nation that has endured the darkness of tyranny and brutality ever since Saddam's Baath party seized control of that unfortunate nation some three decades ago.

Coalition soldiers have purchased with their blood, their sweat, and their tears, the best and brightest chance for freedom and democracy that this Nation and these nations in the Middle